



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Tomzak and Members of City Council
FROM: Phillip L. Rodenberg, City Manager
DATE: October 3, 2007
SUBJECT: City Manager's Update

Highlights of major activities and other notable developments:

UTILITY IMPROVEMENT AND RIVERFRONT PARK FINANCING – The City has submitted an application to the VML/VACO Bond Pool to participate in the Fall 2007 series issuance. The City will seek \$10,750,00 in general obligation bonds for water and wastewater distribution and collection projects (as described in the Spratt PPEA), and for riverfront park property acquisition, design and development. City Council must hold a public hearing prior to the adoption of a resolution authorizing bond issuance. Staff is working with bond counsel to complete all necessary legal requirements.

POLICE PROMOTION – Meredith Haack was promoted to Communications Supervisor on September 8 following a competitive testing and oral review process. Ms. Haack has been employed in the 911 Communications Center since December 2004 and is a recent graduate of the University of Mary Washington. Testament to her work ethic, Ms. Haack attended college full-time while also working full-time on the night shift (7pm – 7am). Beginning October 6, Ms. Haack will transfer to the daytime shift (7am – 7pm).

COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF BUILDINGS IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT – The Planning staff, in partnership with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR), is well into the second phase of a comprehensive survey of buildings in the Historic District. By the Spring 2008, the City will have an up-to-date survey of every property in the District as well as some areas outside the historic overlay zone. A request to the state agency for a third year of funding, however, has been turned down. This third phase would have continued the reconnaissance survey of areas outside the Historic District that are identified in the Comprehensive Plan as areas of historic significance and interest. The intent of this continuing survey is not to surreptitiously expand the Historic District, but to provide sound information for neighborhood planning, in partnership with the community. While VDHR did not fund the third phase of the historic resources survey, the staff recommended that we keep our formal request in place, for reconsideration during the next funding cycle. The City Manager confirmed by letter that the City remains interested in receiving funding for a continued survey and VDHR will reconsider the City's proposal in 2008.

ADVANCED PRESERVATION WORKSHOP – The Planning Department and the Architectural Review Board have received a grant from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, to conduct an advanced preservation workshop. The City is eligible for this type of funding as a result of its participation in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program. This advanced workshop is

scheduled for February 5, 2008 and will include three sessions. The first session will cover preservation and zoning law, the second will review the challenges of infill development, and the third will examine both traditional and new materials. Participants are anticipated to be professionals and practitioners. Key senior city staff will participate. A follow-up publication will also be printed to provide a ready reference on the topics covered, for the participants, interested citizens, and others. A modest fee will be charged to participants to help cover costs. The workshop is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m., which will allow time for officials from other jurisdictions to travel to Fredericksburg. Lunch will be provided and the sessions will end no later than 4 p.m., which will allow participants to travel back home or perhaps stay in town for a debriefing and dinner.

APVA PRESERVATION CONFERENCE – On September 24 and 25, three members of the Architectural Review Board attended training at an Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities preservation conference in Staunton, Virginia. The APVA has not typically provided ARB training, but since absorbing the functions of the now defunct Preservation Alliance of Virginia, this organization has worked with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to offer educational sessions applicable to the needs of local review boards. In addition, Senior Planner Erik Nelson was a speaker on a panel that reviewed issues related to making preservation affordable. The matter of affordability has direct implications for addressing demolition by neglect, which led to a very lively and well received discussion.

FALL TREE PLANTING – The Public Works Department is planning to begin the fall tree planting program in late October. Approximately 110 trees are slated for installation throughout the City, including but not limited to: Normandy Village, Mayfield, College Terrace, College Heights, Hills at Snowden, Huntington Hills, Washington Avenue near the Confederate Cemetery, downtown historic district, and many other areas throughout the City. The new trees are of various species including, but not limited to: Red Maple, Dogwood, Crepe Myrtle, Cherry, Zelcovia, Hornbeam, and Willow Oak. Many of the new trees are replacements for dead or dangerous trees that have recently been removed. *Staff is monitoring the current drought situation and may delay the timing of tree installations if dry conditions persist.*

In addition the Public Works staff is developing a targeted tree replacement program for the \$5000 Dominion Virginia Power funds, but work may be delayed until spring as well.

RAPPAHANNOCK CANAL PUMP STATION CONSTRUCTION - The Corps of Engineers has awarded a contract for the construction of the Rappahannock Canal Pump Station on the Rappahannock River, at the site of the former VEPCO power station. The Corps held a pre-construction meeting with its contractor, General Excavation (Warrenton, Virginia) on Tuesday, September 25th. The contractor is currently submitting applications for permits and shop drawing approvals and hopes to begin construction in late October or early November and the project is expected to take approximately 10 – 12 months to complete. The City has notified the legal counsel for the property owner (C&G Investments) of the proposed time frame for start of construction. The cost of the project is approximately \$1,500,000.

I-95 WELCOME CENTER RE-OPENS; CEREMONY OCTOBER 10 – Economic Development and Tourism staff has been working with state and regional hospitality industry

partners to coordinate the opening ceremony for the newly constructed Virginia Welcome Center on I-95. Julie Perry, Fredericksburg Visitor Center manager, has been instrumental in securing sponsorships and coordinating vendors for the festive "carnival-like" atmosphere at the center on Wednesday, October 10 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The ribbon cutting occurs at 12 noon.

Even if you cannot attend events on the 10th, please stop by the welcome center to see exhibit panels that highlight our area's offerings. An additional fun "photo op" panel is still to be added to the center grounds, and Fredericksburg regional exhibit panels will be installed inside the center after the opening has occurred.

UNITED WAY DAY OF CARING AND ANNUAL CAMPAIGN – On September 20th, eight City employees plus City Councilman Matt Kelly volunteered to assist two Fredericksburg non-profit agencies as part of Day of Caring. These City representatives worked on projects for Hospice Support Care and Big Brothers/Big Sisters that may otherwise go undone due to funding or staffing constraints. To assist Hospice Support Care the City staff raked and bagged leaves, weeded flower beds, trimmed trees and bushes, cleaned out a shed, moved equipment, and cleaned the inside of the project site house from top to bottom. City staff also worked with Big Brother/Big Sister to help run their largest annual fundraiser, an all day golf tournament.

The City of Fredericksburg is a perennial Pacesetter for the Rappahannock United Way. Employees have already pledged over \$35,000 with three more weeks to go.

FRED TRANSIT MAINTENANCE FACILITY – On September 25, the City Manager executed a two-year lease for space for the maintenance and repair and parking of FRED Transit buses. The facility includes approximately 2,700 square feet of enclosed space and 16,000 square feet of fenced parking space. The lease is for \$2,500 per month and includes an option/right of first refusal to purchase the entire building at 400 Amaret Street, which currently includes small businesses. With this new space, FRED will be able to perform a greater range of preventive maintenance activities in-house, which should reduce expenses and decrease the amount of time FRED buses are out of service due to such activities. The fenced parking space is needed to securely house up to 20 FRED buses over night, as the new FRED Transit Center has only 10 spaces for over night parking.

STATE BUDGET REDUCTIONS – The City Manager's Office and Budget and Finance staff are determining the impact of the Governor's reduction in aid to local governments and agencies. We are closely monitoring our revenues and will keep the Council informed.

HUGH MERCER MONUMENT WALKWAY – The Public Works Department is contracting with a construction firm to do a complete replacement of the walkway around the Hugh Mercer Monument by mid-November. Crews have patched the walkway as an interim measure. The City will use approximately \$7,500 in unexpected Concrete Rehabilitation Program funds.

Phillip L. Rodenberg